

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph [0023] as follows:

[0023] FIG. 3 presents a flowchart illustrating the processing of a query in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The ~~system-process~~ starts when the system receives a query that involves the piece of private information (step 302). Next, the system checks the associated column type in database 110 (step 304). If this column type indicates that privacy is enabled, the system creates a hash of the piece of private information (step 306). The system then performs the query using the hash in place of the piece of private information (step 308). For example, the system can perform a “select” on the database where the hash is substituted in the “where” clause in place of the piece of private information. Note that as described previously, the hashing can take place at the database level in a manner that is transparent to the application. For example, the select statement might contain the private information in the “where” clause, and the database, knowing that the column referenced by the “where” clause is marked as privacy-enabled, would automatically hash the data before performing the lookup.